

M E R C A T O R:

O R,

Commerce Retrieved,

B E I N G

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *British* Trade, &c.

From Tuesday, November 24. to Thursday, November 26. 1713.

*The two Propositions laid down formerly now fully proved to be the Effect of the Treaty of Commerce.**Our Exportations to France shall now be more than ever.**Our Importations from France shall be less than ever.**The Mercator entering now on the farther Advantages of the Treaty of Commerce.**Particularly the Treaty of Commerce the only way to check and prevent Clandestine Trade.*

THE two Propositions laid down in the beginning of this part of the Work, are, we think, fully clear'd up, (viz.) That after the Treaty of Commerce shall be made Effectual by Parliament,

1. Our Exportations to France will be more than ever.

2. Our Importations will be less than ever.

The Argument might have been spun out in length to have made it appear in more Particulars, but there is no occasion for it, and therefore to ennumerate the Silks, Brandies, and other Goods, as was intended, seems needless: The Sum of the Argument lies in this, That all the Duties are to be taken off of our Goods in France to the Tariff of 1664, which is but a Trifle; and therefore our Exports will be more: On the other side, very high Duties are to remain upon French Goods Imported here, and that much greater than ever was paid before the War; and therefore less will be Imported.

The *MERCATOR* shall now endeavour to turn your Eyes to some other of the Advantages of the Treaty of Commerce, and speak of it as it respects other Branches of our Trade; in all which it shall appear, that the Interest of Great Britain has been fully considered in all our Treaties both of Peace and Commerce; and particularly this shall be now spoken to as affecting

The Trade to Spain,

The Trade to Portugal,

Our Clandestine Trade at Home.

It has been one of the weighty Evidences of the former Greatness of our French Trade, which our Schememakers have produced, (viz.) That we run Goods on Shore from France to the Value of 400,000 l. a Year; and this they have the Face to add to their other extravagant Sums, to make up a great Total: When the Fraud of this is detected, they rail, give the Lye, and abuse particular Persons, and then say they have Answered.

This they find pleases the People they write to, and so they go on. The *MERCATOR* takes no Notice of them, neither thinking the Persons or their Arguments need any other Answer, than to let sober and impartial Men read them. When Men give the Lye, and call Names, they require no Answer at all; they rather want Correction than a Reply; and this is the Reason, why the *MERCATOR*, from the beginning, has left all such People to talk to the Wind, and resolving to enter into no Paper War, or contend with Men, whose Talent is to cast Dirt, rather than Arguments, is content to let what he says, and what they say, stand upon their own Feet, and perfectly unconcern'd together, leave the World to judge of the Matter between them both.

That Clandestine Trade is carried on in all Countries where the Customs are high, and the Gain worth the Risque, no Man that understands Trade will question; and one of the great and certain Advantages of the Treaty of Commerce with France is, that it is the best and readiest Method yet found out, to put a stop to that Mischief.

But nothing, except the Face, with which these Men write, can pretend, that the Clandestine Trade in French Goods was of any Magnitude worth naming before the War. How it was possible a Writer could publish, that we Imported 400,000 l. a Year by Clandestine Trade in the Year 1685 from France, nothing can account for but his Ignorance, which indeed he did well to acknowledge; and those, who Impos'd so much upon him, ought to make his Reputation amends for it by an Acknowledgment.

To say they did not mean there was so much Imported at that time, but that it is so now, will not do, because he has cast it up with the foot of the Year 1685.

Let these Men tell the World, what these Goods were, or could be, of which such a vast Sum was clandestinely Imported: Brandy or Wine it could not be, as was hinted before. Was it worth any Man's while to Run Brandy



Brandy, when the Duty was but 7 s. 6 d. per Hogshead ; or Claret, when the Duty was but 3 s. a Hogshead ? Would any but Men, as much out of their Wits, as these are, that say so, run the Risque of the Goods to save such a Trifle ? Or if there were some such mad Adventurers, is it likely they should be many, and should do it to any great Sum ?

Silk is the next thing, and this was the same thing in effect : The Duties upon Wrought Silks came to about 3 s. a pound weight, indeed not so much ; and this pound weight was supposed by these Men to be worth 50 s. But as we say 40 s. suppose the last, it is still an unequal Risque, to hazard 40 s. for saving 3 s.

There was nothing Prohibited, which could bear any proportion to such a Sum ; all the Prohibited Goods, that were at that time brought from France, was Bone-Lace, Jassemin Gloves, and playing Cards ; the first of these were brought in to some considerable Value, but then where One Pound Value came from France, Ten Pound came from Flanders ; and all the Goods, that were Run in a Year from France in those Days, according to the Estimation of very good Merchants, could not amount to Ten thousand Pounds, but these Men are not ashamed to call it Four hundred thousand Pounds ; a certain Evidence, what Helps their Case stands in need of, and how useful it was to them to make a loud Sound, tho' indeed, upon examination, it appears to be a great Noise about Nothing.

As to the Clandestine Trade, that is now carried on, by which indeed the fair Merchants are ruined, and the Trade made a National Grievance, this is too well known for any one to Dispute : Now let these Merchants, if they will be Patriots, if they will be Friends to Trade, and Restorers to Commerce, tell us some way, how they will put a stop to it.

The Distillers are as good Judges of, and as great Sufferers by the easie Importation of Brandy, as any Men can be supposed to be : If Brandy should come in again as low as it used to do, the Distilling of Malt Spirits, to the great and irreparable Loss of the whole Nation, must sink and be lost.

But let the Distillers then be asked, Why did they endeavour last Parliament at having the Duties on French Brandy reduced ? Can it be thought, they desire the French Brandy should come in ? no, nothing less : But they see plainly, while the Duty is so high, the whole Coast of Britain is employed in Running it on Shore, and the Country thereby supplied with vast Quantities, which pay no Duty at all, and these sell so cheap, as ruins the Distilling of Malt Spirits more by far, than a free Importation at a moderate Duty would do, because when it might be Imported at a moderate Custom, the Risque of Running it would be as great as before ; but neither the Gain by the Customs be so great, or the Price to be sold for so high, when they had it on Shore.

For this Reason the Distillers were clear in it, that it was better for their Trade that the Brandy should come in at a reasonable moderate Duty, than the height of the Customs might not be so great a Motive to the Clandestine Importation, and encourage so much the Running it on shore.

There are many Reasons to justify this Opinion of the Distillers, but none more Cogent than this, that the great Quantity of Brandy, which is now Run on shore, paying no Duty at all, does them more harm than an open Trade would do ; when a moderate Duty being paid, all that was Imported, should be fairly Entred.

It was unanswerably plain, that if the Duties were low, it would not be so much worth while to run the

hazard. They could not afford to outbid the Queen in bribing her Officers, or to pay the Country People so well for helping and concealing it : They could not afford then to carry it a Hundred Miles by Land-Carriage, as they do now ; the Market Price would not pay for it. These, and the like Reasons convinced the Distillers ; and therefore they were almost unanimously of Opinion, that this was the way to preserve their Trade.

This the Treaty of Commerce has effectually done, and is by this the best Step that could be taken, for preserving the fair Merchant, preventing and discouraging Clandestine Trade, and settling the French Trade to the general Advantage.

For, by this Treaty, enough of the Duty on Brandies is taken off, to prevent and discourage that extravagant Running of Brandy, which is so detrimental to the British Trade ; and yet enough of the Duties are left on, to give the Advantage to the Distillers, and preserve the Consumption of our Malt Spirits in the Nation.

So that the Bill of Commerce is the best, if not the only Medium, that has been yet, or perhaps can be found out, to be an effectual Check to the Clandestine Trade, which is so much carried on at this time, and which is so destructive to the fair Merchant, and other honest Traders of this Kingdom.

From the CUSTOM-HOUSE.

November 20, 21.

1500 Pieces Glass Wares
4344 l. Cotton Wooll
4083 l. } Cotton Yarn
2038 }
6 Ton of Block Tin
2000 l. Shellack
12 Quarter of Wheat
52 Fodder of Lead
20 C. Fustic



*Silver Exported in Bullion in one Month,
from October 23. to November 23.*

To Turkey 37809 oz.
To Holland 48616 oz.
More to Holland in our last 37000 oz.

In all 123425 Ounces of Silver
Exported in one Month, whereof
85616 Ounces to Holland.

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